

shreds by them. She then learned that the released crabs had come to repay her kindness to them.

Even an insect which has no means of attaining enlightenment returns a favor. How can a man ever forget kindness he has received? From this time on, people in Yamashiro province have honored big crabs in the mountain streams and, if they were caught, set them free in order to do good.⁸

I3

On Lushful Love for the Image of Kichijō-tennyō Which Responded with an Extraordinary Sign¹

In a mountain temple of Chinu, Izumi district, Izumi province 和泉國泉郡血津,² there was a clay image of Kichijō-tennyō 吉祥天女.³ In the reign of Emperor Shōmu, a lay brother⁴ of Shinano province 信濃國⁵ came to live in the temple. Attracted to the female image, he felt desire, fell in love with it, and prayed six times a day,⁶ saying, "Please give me a beautiful woman like you."

Once he dreamed of lying with the female deity and the next morning discovered a stain on the skirt of the image. Seeing this, he repented, saying, "I prayed to you to give me a woman like yourself, but what a sacrifice you made to give yourself to me." He was too ashamed to tell others of the event. One disciple, however, heard about it in secret. When he was scolded and expelled from the temple because of disrespect for his teacher, he spoke ill of his teacher and revealed the whole affair. Villagers went to the temple to verify the rumor, and they discovered the stain on the statue. The lay brother could not deceive them and described in detail what had happened.

Indeed, we know that deep faith never fails to gain response. To this effect the *Nehan-gyō* 涅槃經⁷ says: "A lewd man feels desire even for a woman in a picture."

8. See Chap. II(2)a, n. 73, for the Kaniman-ji cycle and the grateful crabs.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XVII, 45).

2. See II.2, n. 3.

3. Or Kichijō-(Kishshō)-ten, a Hindu female deity adopted into the assembly of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. See Chap. II(1)a, n. 6.

4. 優婆塞; see Chap. II(1)d, n. 91.

5. Present Nagano-ken 長野縣.

6. The twenty-four hours are divided into six units, four hours each, and a service is held in each unit; therefore, six times a day.

7. 多淫之人畫女生欲, unlocated in the *Daihatsu nehan-gyō*.

I4

On the Immediate Reward of the Destitute Princess' Devotion to the Image of Kichijō-tennyō¹

In the reign of Emperor Shōmu, twenty-three members of the imperial family² agreed to give banquets and provide entertainment by turn. There was a poor princess³ among them. She had no means to give a banquet when the rest of the group had already done so. Being ashamed of her poverty, the effect of her past deeds, she went to Hatori-dō on the East Side of Nara 諸樂左京服部堂⁴ to worship the image of Kichijō-tennyō.⁵ In tears she said, "As I planted the seed of poverty in my former existence, I reap the fruit now. I went to the banquets, and, after consuming the food of others, I have no means to invite them in return. I implore you to bring me a fortune."

At that moment her child ran to her in haste and said, "A great amount of food has been sent from the former capital."⁶ She ran out and found her former wet nurse saying, "I heard you had received guests and brought you food." The food and drinks were incredibly delicious and fragrant. Nothing was missing. The metal tableware⁷ was carried by thirty men.

All the princes invited to the banquet came and were delighted. There was twice as much food as for the preceding banquets, and she was praised as a rich princess. Each one said, "If she were poor, how could she prepare such an extravagant banquet? It is better than the one I made before." The songs and dances were as extraordinary as the heavenly music.⁸ Some gave away their robes, some their skirts, and others coins, silk, cloth, cotton, etc. The princess, in her joy, gave the robes to her wet nurse to wear, but later, when she went to the temple to worship the sacred image, she found the statue wearing

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XVII, 46). A similar story is found in II.34.

2. 王宗 or 王衆.

3. 女王 *nyōō* or *ōkimi*.

4. Kichijō-tennyō-dō was in Kichijōji-machi, Nara 奈良吉祥寺町. See Fukuyama, *Naratchō jin*, 304-307.

5. See Chap. II(1)d, n. 91.

6. 故京; see I.1, n. 15.

7. Rare and expensive in those days.

8. 鈞天樂 *Kinten no gaku*; the music played at the palace of Shang-ti 上帝, Supreme Lord, located in the center of heaven.

them. Filled with doubt, she went to inquire of her former wet nurse who answered, "I do not know anything about your banquet."

Now it was evident that the bodhisattva⁹ had helped the princess out of sympathy. She acquired a fortune and henceforth escaped poverty. This is an unusual event.

IS

On the Reward of Copying the Hoke-kyō and Holding a Service for a Mother in Revealing the Cause of Her Rebirth as a Cow¹

Takahashi no muraji Azumabito 高橋連東人² was a very wealthy man in the village of Hamishiro, Yamada district, Iga province 伊賀國山田郡 祇代里.³ He copied the *Hoke-kyō* for his mother, making a vow, saying, "I want to invite a monk related to my vow by karma to hold a service for her salvation."⁴ When he finished preparing a place for the service on the following day, he called a servant and said, "The first monk you happen to meet I will make the officiating monk. Don't overlook any monk who seems to be able to perform esoteric rites⁵ and bring him to me."

The servant went first, in accord with his master's request, to the village of Mitani 御谷 in the same district.⁶ There he found a mendicant⁷ lying in the road, drunk, with a bag for a begging bowl at his elbow. His name is not known. He was sleeping so soundly that some mischievous person had shaved his head and hung a rope around him

like a surplice without waking him. Seeing him, the servant woke him with a greeting and asked him to visit his master.

On his arrival, the master greeted him with respect and faith and kept him inside the house for a day and a night, during which time he made a clerical robe in haste and offered it to the mendicant. The mendicant asked "Why have you treated me like this?" and the host replied, "I would like to ask you to expound the *Hoke-kyō*." Then the mendicant said, "I have no learning. I have simply stayed alive by reciting the *Hannya dharani*⁸ and begging food." The host, however, repeated his entreaty. The mendicant thought to himself that the best way for him was a secret escape. Knowing that the mendicant intended to run away, the host had him watched.

That night, the mendicant had a dream. A red cow came to him, saying, "I am the mother of the master of this household. Among his cattle there is a red cow, whose calf is none other than I. Once in my former life, I stole property from my son, and now I am atoning for it in the form of a cow. I have confided this to you with respect and sincerity since you are going to preach on the Mahayana scripture⁹ for me tomorrow. If you feel any doubt about my story, please prepare a seat at the back of the hall where you will preach tomorrow. You will find me seated there."

Awaking from this startling dream, the mendicant was very curious. The next morning he went up to the lecturer's seat, saying, "I am ignorant of Buddhist teachings. I came to take this seat in compliance with my host's entreaty. But I have one thing to tell you, which is a revelation that came to me in a dream." Then he told about the dream in detail. Whereupon the host stood up, prepared a seat, and called the cow, which took the seat and lay down. In sorrowful tears he said, "Indeed this is my mother! I had no idea! Now I will forgive her." The cow heard his words and sighed. When the service ended, the cow died suddenly. All the congregation cried so bitterly that there were echoes of weeping in the hall and in the garden. Nothing has ever been so miraculous as this. The son continued to accumulate merits for his mother.

We know that this miraculous event took place as a consequence of the son's extreme faith born of his feeling for his mother, and the mendicant's merits accumulated from reciting the divine dharani.

8. The dharani in the *Hannya shin-gyō*.

9. 大乘, in this case *Hoke-kyō*.

9. Kichijō-tennyō is not exactly a bodhisattva because of its origin in the Hindu tradition, but it is one of Kannon's Tantric variations according to the *Asahae-shō* 阿婆婆抄, VI (DBZ, 40, 2087). Kyōkai, as well as lay devotees, perceived it as one of the bodhisattvas that was always ready to save them. Myōken is also identified with Kichijō-tennyō.

1. Cf. *Sanhō okotoba* (II, 11), *Hokke kenki* (III, 106), *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XII, 25). A similar story is found in I, 10.

2. Takahashi is the name of a native family, known to have served the Imperial Table Office (内膳司 Naizenshi).

3. Present Ayama-gun, Mie-ken 三重縣阿山郡.

4. 濟度 *saidō*, to guide people across the sea of samsara and over to the other shore, that is, to salvation.

5. 修法 *shuhō*, *shūhō*, or *zūhō*.

6. Unidentified.

7. 乞者.